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DEPT FOR EUR/SCE, DOJ/OPDAT FOR CARL ALEXANDRE, DOJ/ICITAP  
FOR JOSEPH JONES, CARR TREVILLIAN, AND JEFFREY THOMAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: SUCCESSFUL CONVICTION IN ORGANIZED  
CRIME TRIAL

¶1. (U) On September 14, a Macedonian court convicted four defendants from an international organized crime ring on drug smuggling charges. The trial was presided over by a chamber of five judges, including two professional judges, one of whom is the chief presiding judge, and three "lay judges," similar to jurors in the U.S. The court passed down prison sentences for all four defendants; two Macedonian nationals received five-year prison sentences, and one Macedonian and one Greek national each received eight-year prison sentences. The four defendants will remain incarcerated while their convictions are reviewed by an appellate court.

¶2. (U) The convictions were the successful culmination of an international inter-agency effort. Participants in that effort included the Ministry of Interior (MOI) Department for Organized Crime Drug Sector, Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Special Organized Crime Prosecutors' Office, Greek MOI and MOJ representatives, post's OPDAT and ICITAP staff, and the DEA Regional Office in Athens. The investigation team employed a series of special investigative methods, including secret surveillance and undercover agents from Macedonia and

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Greece. In addition, for the first time ever, a DEA agent testified as a protected witness before the Macedonian court.

A parallel trial is ongoing in Greece including other members of the same drug smuggling ring.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: The investigation, arrest, trial, conviction, and sentencing of the drug traffickers is a significant step forward in Macedonia's fight against organized crime and efforts to strengthen the rule of law. The successful performance of the judiciary also should help strengthen Macedonia's ability to meet NATO membership standards. Additionally, the level of cooperation between Macedonia and Greece in this case is an excellent example of how the criminal justice sectors of both nations are taking the lead in improving relations at the working level, even if diplomatic relations remain cool because of the ongoing name dispute.

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